(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) whether the matter was taken up with Government of France; and

(d) if so, the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) to (d) Government have requested European Commission (EC) to grant exceptional flexibilities as per Clause 6 of the India-EU MoU, which was signed in December, 1994. As it was learnt that some EU members were opposing grant of exceptional flexibilities, the matter was taken with all EU members including France through our Missions in EU Member Countries. EU has now decided to release exceptional flexibilities partially amounting to 3500 tonnes subject to fulfilment of certain conditions.

Export of Cotton

†5632. SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH: will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that cotton is exported from the country;

(b) if so, the average quantum of cotton exported annually during the last five years;

(c) what are the names of those countries which are in competition with India in the export cotton in the international market; and

(d) what is the average quantum of cotton exported annually by each of those countries separately?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) and (b) The quantum of cotton exported during the last five years are as under:—

Year (October-September)	Quantity in (Thousand Metric Tons)
1995-96	142.8
1996-97	285.94
1997-98	59.39
1998-99	17.21
1999-2000 (Upto 20.4.2000)	5.73

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) and (d) Some of the major countries which exports cotton and the quantum of cotton exported by each of those countries during the last three years are as under:—

(In thousand Metric tons)

Name of Country	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
Argentina	290	220	166
Australia	519	575	650
Greece	195	187	230
Mali	179	193	215
Syria	186	230	180
U.S.A.	1,495	1,633	915
Uzbekistan	1,042	1,050	900

Handing Over of N.T.C. Mills to States

5633. SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Government have taken any decision to hand over all the mills functioning under National Textile Corporation to the States concerned to make them financially viable without putting any additional burden; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) and (b) In September 1997, the Government of India had offered to the State Governments where the NTC mills are situated, all the assets of the NTC alongwith all the mills situated in the respective States at a nominal cost or even free of cost provided the State Governments are willing to accept the responsibility of running the viable mills and protecting the interest of the workers. The Government of India was also willing to write off/ waive the loans given by the Government of India/NTC (Holding